





## Lancaster County Broadband Authority

### Minutes of Board Meeting

August 5, 2020

#### August 5, 2020

**1. Call to Order & Approval of Minutes:** Cassie Thompson called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. in the public meeting room of the County Administration Building. Cassie Thompson, Margie Armen, and Mark McKercher were present. Minutes of the July 1 and 15 meetings were provisionally approved pending further review.

#### 2. Discussions:

- b. Margie moved that the Authority approve "an expenditure equal to \$1,200 per pass for all newly-served businesses and residences under the VATI grant, *provided that*: the total expenditure shall not exceed \$600,000." This is the motion deferred from the prior meeting. All voted in favor.
- c. Cassie ran down a long list of items to follow up on pertaining to the VATI grant application, including: Submission of our narratives – which is complete; pending support letters from Margaret Ransone, Shannon Kennedy, and Dan Russell; final passing information regarding vacant lots in current developments, brick and mortar businesses, and the treatment of multi-unit buildings.
- d. Cassie also reported that Atlantic Broadband has just informed the Authority that installing fiber to the home (FTTH) is not feasible under the VATI grant, as it will require expensive upgrades to its Weems service hub that ABB is not willing to undertake. Some of the new service under the VATI grant will be FTTH, but most will be HFC (hybrid fiber to coaxial). ABB assured the Authority that this service will still be gigabit capable. Cassie reported that this is very disappointing to learn at this stage of the application process, as it handcuffs new clients to old technology. However, Margie noted that originally ABB stated that the HFC option would be about \$1,000,000 less expensive and she asked ABB to re-evaluate the costs so that the VATI grant request is accurate.
- e. Margie reported that Supervisor Larson expressed concern at the recent Board of Supervisors meeting that the area of the VATI grant submission was limited to Region 3. He stated that his constituents and many others live in proximity to Atlantic Broadband lines but do not have service. They are not being considered in the VATI area. Margie stated in the meeting that:

- The RUS grant that we have pending will be sufficient to serve the whole county including Region 3. If we get that grant we will withdraw from VATI and provide universal service with RUS funds.
- If we do not get the RUS grant, but do get the VATI grant we will have completed service installation in the most populated and least rural area of the County. Then, when we resubmit for RUS in the next funding cycle, our RUS application will be even stronger because it will represent an exclusively rural constituency.
- The VATI proposal as structured makes sense because VATI does not have enough funding available to make a significant impact in the larger unserved areas of the County.
- This project allows ABB to close all the gaps in its service within Region 3, eliminating what we have called "islands" of stranded customers.

Margie indicated that Supervisor Larson remained skeptical and that there is additional information from our various non-public discussions that pertains to this matter. We could brief Supervisor Larson confidentially on this information if the Authority wishes to do so.

- a. Margie reported that she has completed the Final Report for the Telecommunications Planning Grant and emailed it to Tammy Breski to determine whether it is acceptable for completing the final milestone of the grant. Mark reported that Tammy Breski called him to discuss the uploading of documents. In a follow-up call with Tammy and Tamarah Holmes, Margie and Cassie reported that the remittance strategy was agreed to. We will withdraw previously submitted remittance requests totaling \$18,000, which represent our expenditures of "leveraged" funds. We will submit remittance requests only for the invoices from BTS. Those invoices, which total \$50,000 (\$44,200 of which is reimbursable under the grant) should generate the payment of the full grant amount of \$40,000.

**3. Schedule next meeting and Adjourn:** The meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m. The next meeting is the regularly scheduled meeting for August 19, 2020 to be held in the public meeting room of the County Administration Building at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Secretary